

**Statement of Senator Max Baucus
Environment and Public Works Committee
“Vice President Gore’s Perspective on Global Warming”
March 21, 2007**

Psalm 19 exclaims “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands.”

Anyone who has visited Montana would agree. The beauty of the untamed Yellowstone River. The Abundance of wildlife on the prairie. The majesty of Glacier National Park. In the wide open spaces and the majestic Big Sky, we Montanans see the work of God’s hands.

With this great gift comes an important responsibility. We are called to be stewards of creation. And never has creation faced so great a challenge as that posed by climate change.

I would like to thank the Chairman for calling this hearing and inviting Vice President Gore to testify. Vice President Gore joined me on a hike at Grinnell Glacier a few years back. Grinnell -- located in Glacier National Park -- is ironically one of the many glaciers that climate change is threatening. We had a good time. Although Grinnell is a better hike without the crowd the Vice President attracts!

No one has done more to call attention to this issue than our former colleague from Tennessee. I agree with Vice President Gore that climate change is real, it is man made, and the need for action is urgent.

Montana is an agricultural state, a tourist state, and a coal state. While action is not without cost, the costs of inaction are far greater. What is the cost of a trout stream whose waters are too warm to fish? What is the price of more devastating forest fires,

longer droughts, and no glaciers in Glacier National Park? How do you apply a cost benefit analysis to this moral responsibility?

In February, the International Panel on Climate Change report stated that there is 90% certainty that most of the temperature increase since the middle of the 20th century is due to the increase in man-made greenhouse gases. While some will continue to debate the fringes of the issue, this finding cannot be ignored. The earth is warming, and there will be real consequences.

Montanans know this too well. 2005 and 2006 were two of the hottest years on record. And hotter weather means bigger fires. We are coming off another horrible fire season. Over one million acres burned in wildland fires this past summer. In Montana, wildfires over 1000 acres have increased six fold over the last 40 years.

The potential costs to our wildlife and tourism sector are also great. Montanans are outdoors people. We hunt, we fish. We take our kids hiking and camping. It's part of our great outdoor heritage. But that heritage is at risk.

Already warmer temperatures have lead to stream closures to protect stressed trout in the heat of summer. Some studies indicate that warming water temperatures could reduce trout habitat in Montana by 5 to 30 percent by 2090. Fishing defines us as Montanans, but it's also big business. The sport generates \$235 million dollars in economic activity every year.

Montana is also an agricultural state. Our farmers are suffering through the seventh year of drought. With less water for irrigation and lower yields, some of our farmers are barely hanging on.

The good news is that our farmers are part of the solution. Through practices like no-till farming the good stewards of our land can also sequester carbon. I look forward to working with my colleagues to make sure climate legislation rewards farmers for their good practices.

Finally, Montana is a coal state. Montana has 120 billion tons of coal, more than any other state in the union. This resource will have to be part of the solution to meeting our energy needs. However, we must develop it the right way.

An economy wide cap and trade program is needed. Economy wide initiatives send the proper price signals to industry that the days of emitting carbon into our atmosphere are over.

To accomplish our carbon emission goals we must make sure the allocation formulas and tax incentives are in place to accelerate carbon capture and sequestration.

Our most important resources are our resolve and ingenuity. In Montana we have increased our wind generating capacity over 70 fold in the last two years. The potential for this clean energy is huge. We can replicate this success with solar, biofuels, and other clean forms of energy. We must begin the process of developing the next generation of energy technologies here at home.

During World War II we rose to the challenge of Hitler and defeated fascism. Under President Kennedy we rose to the challenge of Sputnik and put a man on the moon. Now it is our turn to rise to the challenge of climate change.